FORM 2820
12-67

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25X1A2d1

[redacted] SECRET
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FILE INFO

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25X1A2d1

[redacted] 140452Z JAN 69 CITE [redacted]

PRIORITY [redacted] INFO PRIORITY [redacted] 25X1A6c

[redacted] 25X1A2d1 25X1A2d1

FROM COL. SHELTON [redacted] PLS PASS TO GEN, ROSS PRIOR TO [redacted] 25X1A2d1

[redacted] DEPARTURE) 25X1A2d1

1. ACCIDENT BOARD CONCLUDED PROCEEDINGS MONDAY 13 JANUARY. FINAL REPORT WILL BE ASSEMBLED BY COB 14 JAN AND BOARD DISSOLVED.

2. THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS ARE EXTRACTED FOR INFORMATION:

A. PRIMARY CAUSE: THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF THIS ACCIDENT COULD NOT BE DETERMINED DUE TO LOSS OF AIRCRAFT AND PILOT AND LIMITED FACTUAL DATA FOR ANALYSIS.

B. MOST PROBABLE CAUSE: AIRCRAFT ENTERED A HIGH MACH TUCK FLIGHT CONDITION, BECAUSE OF AN UNDETERMINED REASON, FROM WHICH THE PILOT DID NOT RECOVER BEFORE AIRCRAFT BREAK UP. 25X1A2d1

C. POSSIBLE CAUSES: ANALYSIS AND CAREFUL STUDY OF [redacted] DATA, POSSIBLE EMERGENCIES, AND LIKELY PILOT ACTIONS FAILED TO ESTABLISH A REASON FOR THE MANUAL AUTOPILOT DISCONNECT AND SUBSEQUENT ENTRY INTO, OR A DEEPER PENETRATION INTO THE MACH BUFFET REGION. THE FOLLOWING POSSIBLE CAUSES ARE CIRCUMSTANTIALLY SUPPORTED:

(1) TURBULENCE: FACTUAL DATA FAILED TO ESTABLISH PRESENCE OF TURBULENCE, HOWEVER, WEATHER INFORMATION INDICATES POSSIBILITY OF

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TURBULENCE IN THE AREA.

(2) POWER PLANT: THE PREPONDERANCE OF INFORMATION RULES OUT A SERIOUS ENGINE FAILURE. HOWEVER, THE BOARD RECOGNIZED THE POSSIBILITY OF A MINOR ENGINE PROBLEM (WITH UNUSUAL NOISE OR VIBRATION) IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO MANUAL AUTOPILOT DISENGAGE. IF THIS OR SOMETHING SIMILAR WERE THE CASE THE PILOT COULD HAVE BEEN MORE CONCERNED WITH THE ENGINE OR OTHER ASSOCIATED INDICATIONS THAN WITH FLIGHT INSTRUMENTS.

(3) AUTOPILOT/AIRSPEED/ALTIMETER: THE BOARD CONSIDERED A MINOR AUTOPILOT/ALTIMETER/AIRSPEED RELATED PROBLEM AS REASON FOR MANUAL AUTOPILOT DISCONNECT AND ENTRY INTO THE MACH BUFFET REGION.

(4) OPERATOR FACTORS: CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION, PILOT EXPERIENCE AND PROFICIENCY ALL BUT ELIMINATE PILOT FACTORS. HOWEVER, CONSENSUS WAS THAT PILOT COULD HAVE FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON CONTRIBUTED TO THE ENTRY INTO THE HIGH MACH BUFFET. ONE OTHER POSSIBILITY INCLUDED FAILURE TO RETURN THE GUST CONTROL FROM GUST TO FAIRED IF USED IN SUSPECT TURBULENCE DURING INITIAL CLIMB.

(5) FATE OF THE PILOT: (A) ON THE BASIS OF ALL AVAILABLE INFO, THE PILOT DID NOT SURVIVE THIS ACCIDENT. WHY HE DID NOT SURVIVE IS

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OPEN TO CONJECTURE, BUT PROBABLY IS EITHER DUE TO AN UNSUCCESSFUL (SURVIVABLE) EJECTION OR A SUCCESSFUL EJECTION WITH FAILURE OF SURVIVAL AFTER HE REACHED THE WATER. (B) UNDER SUCCESSFUL EJECTION, CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO THE PILOT BEING TRAPPED IN THE AIRCRAFT, TO HIS STRIKING OR BEING STRUCK BY SOME PART OF THE AIRCRAFT, AND TO HIS EJECTING AT TOO LOW AN ALTITUDE DUE TO VARIOUS REASONS. THE HYPOTHESIS THAT HE EJECTED AT AN ALTITUDE TOO LOW TO SURVIVE IMPACT WOULD SEEM TO BE THE MOST LIKELY. (C) UNDER THE TOPIC OF A SUCCESSFUL EJECTION WITH FAILURE TO SURVIVE IN THE SEA, FAILURE OF RESCUE/SURVIVAL GEAR, INABILITY TO USE THIS GEAR DUE TO INCAPACITATION OR SEA STATE, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF INADEQUATE EMERGENCY AND RESCUE/SURVIVAL TNG WERE CONSIDERED. ALL OF THE ABOVE ARE POSSIBLE, WHETHER ANY OF THEM OCCURED IS UNKNOWN. (D) ONE AREA THAT COULD HAVE POSSIBLY HAMPERED OR DELAYED THE POSSIBILITY OF RESCUE WERE THAT THE URT-21 LOCATOR BEACON WAS NOT IN THE AUTOMATIC MODE AND WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACTUATED IMMEDIATELY ON PARACHUTE DEPLOYMENT. AN AIR-SEA RESCUE AIRCRAFT WAS WITHIN 50 MILES OF THE PRESUMED IMPACT AREA AND CAPABLE OF RECEIVING EMISSIONS FROM THIS LOCATOR BEACON, BUT NO SIGNALS WERE RECEIVED. (E) ANOTHER AREA THAT COULD HAVE HAMPERED RESCUE EFFORTS WAS THAT HIS FLYING CLOTHING, WITH THE

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CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

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EXCEPTION OF HIS HELMET SHELL WAS DARK IN COLOR AND HIS LIFE RAFT WAS BLACK. VISIBILITY IN THE SEARCH AREA WAS LIMITED. AND THIS PILOT PROBABLY NEEDED MAXIMUM VISIBILITY TO INCREASE HIS CHANCES OF BEING SIGHTED WITHIN THE 72 HOURS QUOTED AS THE TIME HE COULD HAVE SURVIVED IN THE WATER.

25X1A9a 25X1A9a

5. FOR GEN. ROSS. PRESENTED BRIEFING OF ACCIDENT BOARD ANALYSIS, CONCLUSSION AND SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS TO [redacted] 13 JAN. 25X1C8c

PRESENT WERE [redacted] 25X1C8c

[redacted] SEEMED 25X1C8c

SATISFIED WITH BOARDS CONCLUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION TO RESUME FLYING IMMEDIATELY. HE SUBSEQUENTLY AUTHORIZED [redacted] TO 25X1C8c

RESUME FLYING WHEN WEATHER IMPROVES (WE'VE HAD RAIN AND LOW CEILING LAST TWO DAYS). HAVE A GOOD TRIP OUT. WE PREPARED TO 25X1A2d1

BRIEF YOU ON ACCIDENT DETAILS AT YOUR CONVENIENCE. FYI, [redacted]

[redacted] BRIEFING BEING GIVEN BY [redacted] FOR [redacted] 25X1C8c

[redacted] AND [redacted] THIS AFTERNOON (TUESDAY). I UNABLE TO ATTEND DUE FINAL CONCLUSSION OF ACCIDENT REPORT. 25X1A2d1

[redacted] S E C R E T

25X1C8c 25X1A6b

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